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SEPTEMBER 1 1914

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# THE MENTOR

SHAKESPEARE

DEPARTMENT OF  
LITERATURE

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# The Mentor Association

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## THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION, INC.

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# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

By HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

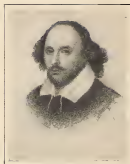
*Author and Editor*

MENTOR GRAVURES

ROOM IN WHICH  
SHAKESPEARE WAS  
BORN

ANNE HATHAWAY'S  
COTTAGE

SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE,  
STRATFORD



SHAKESPEARE

From the Chandos portrait in the  
National Gallery, London

MENTOR GRAVURES

SHAKESPEARE'S  
WORKROOM

THE AVON AND  
STRATFORD CHURCH

SHAKESPEARE'S GRAVE  
IN STRATFORD CHURCH



THE MENTOR · DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE

SEPTEMBER 1, 1914



THERE are three questions the answers to which, if sufficiently full and clear, make a man's life and work comprehensible. They do not explain his genius, which remains a mystery, though its qualities and modes of expression may be analyzed, but they explain the form of his work, the art of it, its limitations and its power; and the answers to these questions are especially illuminating when they are asked and answered about men of genius. For genius is not primarily intellectual: it is primarily spiritual; it is the power of intuition, of divining what is in the hearts and minds of people. There are forcible speakers who bring what they have to say completely phrased and impose it upon their auditors; but this is not the way of the great orator. He knows what is in the minds and hearts of the audience; he feels the atmosphere; everyone who listens to him has the feeling that the speaker is talking directly to him. The orator creates a sense of intimacy between himself and his audience. His convictions are not changed; but the manner of presenting them is deeply affected. Mr. Gladstone once said that what the orator received from the audience as mist he gave back as rain.

Shakespeare was preëminently a man of genius, and more sensitive, perhaps, to the atmosphere of his age than any other man of his time.

# W I L L I A M   S H A K E S P E A R E

The questions which are touchstones to bring out the manner of a man's work are three: When? Where? How?

The answer to the first of these questions sheds a flood of light on Shakespeare,—“the sixteenth century.”

## THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

A hundred years earlier the intellectual freedom of the plays, the

curiosity about life, and the interest in life which they express, would have been impossible. Their writer was lifted on a great tide of vitality which energized the English people, made them ardent explorers, daring sailors, filled them with faith in the capacity of men to achieve a development which had been held in check



THE GARDEN OF SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE  
At Stratford-on-Avon

by the rigid division into ranks of society in the Middle Ages. A current of fresh air was blowing through the world when Shakespeare came, and no one felt it more keenly than he.

There was widespread curiosity about life, and Englishmen began to travel and to report the ways in which other peoples lived. They went especially to France and Italy, and some of the men whom Shakespeare knew in London had a smattering of the languages of these countries. They brought home foreign fashions, manners, stories. Those who could not travel read many of the most famous books in English translation;



BACK OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
At Stratford-on-Avon

## W I L L I A M   S H A K E S P E A R E

for England was ceasing to be an island outside European interests and was becoming one of the active nations in the affairs of the world. It is possible that Shakespeare may have visited other countries; for companies of English actors sometimes went as far as Germany and Denmark. It is probable, however, that he picked up his limited speaking knowledge of French at home. It could have been done so easily that he would hardly have been conscious of the process. A man of genius absorbs knowledge of certain kinds as easily as he breathes. The translations of



SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE  
The Shakespeare cottage before it was restored

Plutarch's Lives, of Montaigne's Essays, of certain French and Italian plays, gave him a vast range of dramatic material, upon which he drew with great freedom.

### SHAKESPEARE'S EDUCATION

He was born in a little inland town of probably fifteen hundred people; but there was a grammar school in Stratford, and we know what books were studied in such schools. They were not many; but they were

## W I L L I A M   S H A K E S P E A R E

of the kind which cultivates as well as trains the mind. They were Plautus and Terence, the Latin comedy writers; Ovid, Virgil, and Horace, the Latin poets; Cicero the orator; and Seneca the moralist. Shakespeare had also a very considerable knowledge of medicine, law, music, theology, botany. Knowledge of these subjects was widespread in England in the sixteenth century; but it was popular, not scholarly, knowledge, and Shakespeare used it as a man of genius would use it, for purposes of illustration. Much emphasis has been laid on his familiarity with the law. As a matter of fact, other dramatists of his time show greater knowledge of the law, and even so romantic a poet as Spenser uses legal terms with greater accuracy than Shakespeare.

*Where?* The plays of Shakespeare are a kind of compendium of history. They bring

on the stage men and women of many races and ages,—Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Jews, Italians, Frenchmen, Danes, Moors, Scots of semihistoric times, and Englishmen from the time of Lear to that of Henry VIII. In the England of the sixteenth century Shakespeare found himself in the freest country in



THE GUILD CHAPEL

At Stratford-on-Avon. Next to the chapel is the old grammar school in which Shakespeare was educated



INTERIOR OF ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE

At Stratford-on-Avon

Europe, and intellectually the most cosmopolitan. This is true in spite of the fact that modern intellectual life had received its earliest impulse in Italy.

### A VIGOROUS AGE

In England the author of "Hamlet" lived his life in an invigorating moral atmosphere. There was much coarseness and not a little grossness of taste and life, and a century later there was a distinct lowering of the moral standards; but English life was essentially sound during the years between 1586 and 1610 or 1612, when Shakespeare was at work in London. It was a vigorous and wholesome age, disposed to take the chances of life bravely, and to believe in a man's will rather than in fate. This is the great note of the plays,—“character is destiny,”—and it is the secret of their impressiveness as works of dramatic art. They are free from the moral confusion of some recent plays, they are equally free from moralization; but the dramatic sequence of deed and consequence is never broken, and character is the result of things done. In "Lear" the world of the play expands beyond its familiar limits, and the solution of the problem demands a bigger stage; but that world is never a world of chance or of moral chaos.

Living in a highly energized age and among an active, vigorous race, the decisive question with regard to Shakespeare's genius is, *How* did it express itself? The answer to that question involves the personality of the man and the influences which most deeply affected him: time and place being foremost among those influences. Shakespeare was a poet as well as a dramatist. He probably never thought of himself as an author, so far as the plays were concerned. They were written in the course of his business as a purveyor of plays for the theater. He probably never thought of them as being literature in the modern sense of the word. But he wrote a collection of sonnets and two poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," and he may have had the same



SHAKESPEARE THE MAN

From a drawing by Adolph Von Menzel, the distinguished German artist. This picture, drawn in 1850, when Menzel was first becoming famous, shows a strong feeling of reality.

# W I L L I A M   S H A K E S P E A R E



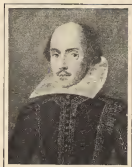
From a painting by John Wood

## SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Sylvester	Seldon	Beaumont	Bacon	Daniel	Raleigh	Dekker
		Fletcher		Donne	Hart of Southampton	
Camden	Seckville, Earl of Dorset	Ben Jonson	Shakespeare	Sir Robert Cotton		

sense of proprietary interest in them that Spenser had in the "Faerie Queen." These poems and such plays as "The Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," and "As You Like It," reveal Shakespeare as a poet of genius, and in nearly all the plays the dramatist is hand in hand with the poet. Shakespeare might easily have chosen the poetic form in which to express his genius: he chose the dramatic form instead. Why?

He spent his boyhood in the village of Stratford, in one of the most beautiful counties in England. It was an age much given to brilliant spectacles and delighting in "shows" of all kinds. Organized theaters were still in their infancy when Shakespeare was a boy; but strolling bands of players traveled through the country, and Stratford seems to have been specially popular with them. Shakespeare undoubtedly felt their attraction for a boy of imagination.



## SHAKESPEARE

From the engraving by Martin Droeshout, published in the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's works in 1623. The following lines, written by Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's friend and fellow poet, appeared with the picture:

### TO THE READER

This figure that thou here dost see,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut.  
Whom the generous soul of a good  
With nature, to embody the life,  
O could he but have drawn his wit  
As well in lines as he hath put  
His face, the great world's common sense  
All that was ever said in prose  
But since he cannot, write, look  
Not on his picture, but his book.



# W I L L I A M   S H A K E S P E A R E

## THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY THEATER

He was twenty-two years old when he went to London, as countless youths have gone, to find work. He secured some kind of work connected with the theater, of which London possessed two. There were also several companies of players. Thenceforth, until his return to Stratford about 1612, Shakespeare was closely identified with the theater as actor, writer of plays, manager, and shareholder. It gave him occupation, furnished him with the tools of his trade, taught him how to use them, and ultimately made him a man of fortune.

The age reinforced the practical opportunities which the theater offered. It was an age of vivid imagination, and it was an age of action, and the drama has always been the form of literature through which such an age has expressed itself. This was true of Greece; it has been true of Spain, France, Germany; it is true of the present age. Shakespeare came at the moment when the play was not only becoming literature, but when it was becoming the most popular form of expressing English feeling. The theater took the place of the newspaper, the library, the lecture. Shakespeare was a journalist in his interest in his own time and his response to the interests of people about him. He was always the playwright, the maker of plays who knew how to put a play on the stage so as to interest the audience. Play writing is different from all other kinds of writing, as authors of novels discover where they try to dramatize their stories.

Shakespeare understood what is called "stage business" perfectly. He found in the theater many plays which were more or less popular. These plays belonged to the theater:



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### SHAKESPEARE

From the statue modeled by Frederick MacMonnies, in the Congressional Library at Washington, D. C. The face of this statue is based on the Drouhot engraving shown on the opposite page

## W I L L I A M   S H A K E S P E A R E

no one had any sense of personal ownership in them. Shakespeare's first work was in making over some of these plays. This was his period of apprenticeship. Presently he began to write plays on his own account. Among these earliest plays are "The Comedy of Errors," "Love's Labour's Lost," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona,"—plays not without touches of his genius, but, compared with his late work, inferior in construction and in expression.

During the twenty-five years spent in London, Shakespeare wrote thirty-six or more plays. These were all written to be acted, not to be read. They were sold to the theaters, and it was to the author's interest that they should not be printed. So far as they were printed during his lifetime it was without his knowledge or consent. The mistakes, corruptions, and obscurities in the text of the plays are due to this fact. Shakespeare never thought of his plays as literature. In his time plays were to be



SHAKESPEARE

*This statue, which is the work of the famous American sculptor, John Quincy Adams Ward, now stands in Central Park, New York City*



SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATER  
At Stratford-on-Avon

acted, not read, and no playwright thought of himself as a man of letters or had the sensitive modern feeling of ownership in his plays.

### SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

The plays may be grouped in the order of time, or they may be grouped according to dramatic form. As a



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Photographed from the island at Stratford-on-Avon

matter of fact, the two methods of arrangement do not greatly differ in the results. The Historical plays, the Poetic plays, the Comedies, the Tragedies, and the so-called Romances were written in successive periods. This statement must not be pressed too far; but it is substantially true. "Romeo and Juliet" and "The Midsummer Night's Dream," in which the poet in Shakespeare collaborates on terms of equality with the dramatist, were probably written between 1596 and 1598. The Comedies were written between 1590 and 1600; the Tragedies were written between 1601 and 1609; "Cymbeline," "The Winter's Tale," "The Tempest," were the fruits of the closing years in London. There is widespread impression that originality is another name for invention; but Shakespeare, although the most original, was one of the least inventive writers of his age. He ranks with Æschylus, Homer, Dante, and Goethe, the greatest poets in the literature of the world. Now it is an interesting fact that none of these men of creative genius was inventive in the sense of producing novel things. The "Iliad" and "Odyssey" are poetic renderings of stories which had floated about Greece for centuries before Homer was born; "The Divine Comedy" is a spiritual interpretation of the mind and heart of the Middle Ages; "Faust" is a dramatization of a legend that was a household tale during the Middle Ages.

The poet of genius does not write out of his own narrow experiences, but out of the experience of humanity. In all his work the race is the silent partner. Shakespeare drew the materials for his plays from many sources. He seems never to have taken the trouble to invent the plots of his plays: with one or two exceptions the sources of all his plots are known. He was one of the least inventive and at the same time most original men of his time. Originality in art is not the discovery of novel ways of doing things, as in the mechanical inventions in the Patent Office: it is a fresh or powerful way of dealing with old material, an interpretation from an individual point of view of the facts of life which are common to all men, a rendering of those facts in the light and with the color of an original temperament.

The materials for building—stone, wood, brick—are within any man's reach; but it is only the great architect who can make noble buildings of them. Life is too great for mere novelty or imitation. Men of genius do not contrive new things: they represent or interpret the great things of life greatly.

#### GREATEST OF POETS AND DRAMATISTS

Shakespeare's originality is shown by his bold and effective handling of the material he found in earlier plays, in biographies like Plutarch's "Lives," and in semihistorical books like Holinshed's "Chronicles." He takes what is significant and rejects that which is mere detail. He develops slight sketches into striking characters, and combines incidents so as to make them tell a story dramatically. He develops his men and women as the result of the deeds they commit, and so secures the moral sequence which is the soul of the drama. He makes the play a revelation of universal law, so that each one of the great tragedies reads like a chapter out of the history of humanity. His characters become vehi-



THE STRATFORD BUST AND MONUMENT  
In Holy Trinity Church at Stratford-on-Avon.  
This monument was erected before 1625

# W I L L I A M S H A K E S P E A R E

cles for conveying the profoundest truths about human life; and, without sacrificing reality, he invests his plays with the air of greatness which is breathed in the loftiest poetry. He is not free from the grossness of his age; but he purifies and refines the material which comes to his hand, and changes lead into gold and clay into marble. He was a very uneven workman, sometimes careless and apparently indifferent and impatient: at other times his workmanship was almost flawless. "Cymbeline," for instance, is badly constructed and careless in style: on the other hand, "Othello" is from every point of view a superb example of the drama. The earlier plays are often slight in substance and full of faults of construction: the later plays are sometimes overweighted with thought, as if the dramatist had become absorbed in the truth of life which he wanted to convey and had become impatient of the form.

In his best work Shakespeare is without a rival in his dramatic

effectiveness, his superb character drawing, the profundity of his thought, and the inimitable beauty of his style. In his happiest moments he is the greatest of poets and the greatest of dramatists.



THE MASK OF SHAKESPEARE

## SUPPLEMENTARY READING

SHAKESPEARE, THE MAN AND HIS WORK

*By W. C. Halli.*

LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*By Sidney Lee.*

SWEET AVON

*By G. Morley.*

SHAKESPEARE AND THE MODERN STAGE

*By Sidney Lee.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, POET, DRAMATIST, AND MAN

*By Hamilton W. Mable.*

SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CRITICS

*By G. F. Johnson.*

SHAKESPEARE AND THE DRAMA

(Translated)

*By Count L. N. Tolstoi.*

SHAKESPEARE (English Men of Letters Series)

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THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

*By T. Seacombe and J. W. Allen.*

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*By A. C. Swinburne.*

SHAKESPEARE AS A DRAMATIC ARTIST

*By T. R. Levensbury.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*By Barrett Wendell.*

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE

*By Charles Lamb.*

SCENES FROM SHAKESPEARE FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

*By M. A. Woods.*

## THE MENTOR READING CIRCLE

Shakespeare was not an author who wrote for print. He confined himself to acting, writing, and producing plays. The publications of his works were crude. The plays were printed and published first in what are known as the quarto editions, each play in a volume by itself. Some of these quartos are still in existence. They are very rare and valuable. These were the only printed forms of publication of Shakespeare's works that appeared in his lifetime.

In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, the first complete volume of Shakespeare's works was published. It is known as the First Folio edition, and is one of the most famous books in the world. "Folio," like "quarto," is a book manufacturer's term, and it indicates the size of a volume. The First Folio of Shakespeare was 13 inches by 8½ inches. Three other Folio editions followed, the second in 1632, the third in 1664, and the fourth in 1685; but the First Folio is the famous book. There are a number of copies of this wonderful book in existence, and its value in the market has gone up in leaps and bounds. There is a copy in the Columbia University Library, which was purchased about forty years ago at not over \$3,000. Twenty-five years ago an excellent copy in the possession of Baroness Burdett-Coutts was valued at \$5,000. In fifteen years the book was worth \$10,000, and now, within the last two years, the First Folio owned by Robert Hoe brought \$13,000.

And so, though Shakespeare did not write for print and in his day saw little profit in the printed book, the first edition of his collected works has become one of the most valuable books in the world.

\*\*\*  
The First Folio Shakespeare is a curious volume in many ways. All who are interested should examine it. Faithful photographic reproductions of the book can be obtained through the booksellers. Get hold of a copy and look it over. The first thing that will strike you will be the crude printing, the misspelt words, and the blunders in the numbering of the pages. There are so many errors of various kinds that you are likely to form one of two conclusions,—either that those worthy old printers, William and Isaac

Taggard, were paragons of stupidity, or else that these queer blunders were made by design. Long ago some ingenious minds fixed upon the latter conclusion and developed it into a wonderful theory. This theory found its fullest expression in a stupendous work of nearly 2,000 pages by the Hon. Ignatius Donnelly, in which he maintains that the Shakespeare First Folio was a supremely clever and masterly cipher work. Then, by means of a number of devices and formulas which Mr. Donnelly called his "key," he unraveled the ciphering, and revealed therein a statement that these immortal plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by Francis Bacon.

\*\*\*  
It was perhaps a very good thing that the Hon. Ignatius Donnelly constructed this huge monument to misguided energy; for it served as a burial monument to the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, which had been active for many years. Beginning about the middle of the nineteenth century, various writers took up the case of Francis Bacon, and for many years articles and books appeared in support of the theory that Francis Bacon wrote the Shakespeare plays. The literature on the subject was extensive. All kinds of evidences were brought forward to show that Shakespeare could not have been the author of the plays, and that the real author was Francis Bacon. But all of these theories went down to oblivion when the Hon. Ignatius Donnelly brought out his work and tried to prove that the First Folio was a great cipher prepared by Francis Bacon, in which, under the immortal lines of the plays, Bacon had imparted a message telling of the true authorship of the works—and a whole lot of other things besides.

\*\*\*  
That seems to have effectually checked the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy—at least for awhile. Mr. Donnelly proved all that the rest had tried to do, and he proved so much more that there wasn't anything left for others to do. The only trouble with Mr. Donnelly was that he proved too much. So with a sense of relief all true lovers of Shakespeare returned to worship him in the simple faith of their childhood.



ROOM IN WHICH SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN



THE ROOM IN WHICH SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN in April, 1564, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Shakespeare."

### THE BOYHOOD OF SHAKESPEARE

Monograph Number Two in The Mentor Reading Course

**W**ILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was baptized in the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, England, on April 26, 1564. No one knows the exact day on which he was born. His birthday could not have been later than April 23, because the inscription on his monument shows that on April 23, 1616, he had already begun his fifty-third year. At any rate, the great poet's birthday is usually placed in April, 1564.

Shakespeare's father, John, was a prominent man in Stratford. He was alderman at one time, and later held the chief municipal office, that of high bailiff. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer.

Shakespeare had a number of brothers and sisters; but none of them achieved the fame that William did.

We may think of Shakespeare in his boyhood as the son of one of the leading citizens of a rather important provincial market town. Stratford stands on the river Avon, in the midst of an agricultural country throughout which, in those days, inclosed orchards and meadows alternated with open fields for tillage, and not far from the wilder and wooded district known as the Forest of Arden. It had a free grammar school, and here

it was that the poet received his education, which was a good one for those days. He never became an exact scholar, because he probably left school when he was about thirteen years old; but, as his plays show, he must have read to advantage a number of good books, especially in history and the classics.

In 1557 the fortunes of Shakespeare's father took a turn for the worse. For this reason the boy left school, and began to help his father in his work. It is said that he killed calves and "would do it in a high style and make a speech." Even then he had the germ of acting in his blood.

Companies of players visited Stratford in those days, and not far away was Kenilworth, where wonderful masques and plays were shown before Queen Elizabeth. Likewise, in the neighboring village of Coventry, from time to time festivals of acting were held. In this way Shakespeare grew to know something of the workings of drama.

When he was only eighteen years old Shakespeare married. His wife was Anne Hathaway, who was about eight years older than her boyish husband. Their first child, Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583, and on February 2, 1585, twins, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION

ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 2, No. 18, SERIAL No. 66

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ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE



NE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, the girlhood home of Shakespeare's wife, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Shakespeare."

### PLAYWRIGHT AND POET

Monograph Number Three in The Mentor Reading Course

SHAKESPEARE lived very happily with his wife for three or four years after his marriage; but about 1587 his career at Stratford came to a sudden and stormy close for a time, and he went to London to seek his fortune.

It is said that Shakespeare got into trouble through poaching on the estates of a rich Warwickshire magnate named Sir Thomas Lucy. He was caught and punished, and then, in revenge, wrote such annoying verses about Sir Thomas that he had to run away to escape his anger. Later, in his play, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," he satirized Lucy as "Justice Shallow," with the dozen white louses on his old coat.

Of all the men who tramped wearily to London in the olden times, hoping to make their way in the world, none probably had a sadder heart than William Shakespeare. He had left behind him, in the home that he loved, a wife and three children, a father sinking into poverty, and only a reputation for troublesomeness. Never had he done a thing to make people think well of him.

And yet only ten years elapsed between then and his return to Stratford. Now he was a rich man, a friend of the greatest minds in the land, and a favorite of Queen Elizabeth's. What had happened in the meanwhile?

It is rather difficult to say what happened to Shakespeare within the years 1587 to 1592. Much indeed might

have happened to the young man. It is said that at times he was a scrivener, an apothecary, a dyer, a printer, and a soldier. Certainly in his plays he gives evidence of knowing something about all these trades. He finally, of course, drifted to the theater.

At first his employment was rather a menial one. According to tradition, he became holder of the horses on which some of the richer playgoers arrived. It has been suggested that he organized a service for this purpose, taking loungers about the theater into his employment. But it was not long before he was admitted to the company as an actor. This soon led to his rewriting plays and joining with other men in composing new ones. In fact, so much success had he that by the summer of 1592, when he was twenty-eight years old, other playwrights had become jealous of him.

At the same time, Shakespeare made an attempt to win fame with pure poetry. He published "Venus and Adonis" in 1593, and "Lucrece" in 1594.

From June, 1592, to April, 1594, London theaters were closed on account of riots and the plague, with the exception of about a month at each Christmas during that period. It has been surmised that during this time of enforced leisure Shakespeare journeyed about the continent of Europe. This has never been proved, however.

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SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE, STRATFORD



SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE, in beautiful Stratford-on-Avon, the home of the great English poet and playwright, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Shakespeare."

#### THE ACTOR MANAGER

Monograph Number Four in The Mentor Reading Course

FROM the time of the reopening of the London theaters in the summer of 1594 Shakespeare's place in the theatrical world is much clearer. He had certainly become a leading member of the Chamberlain's Company by the following winter, when his name appears for the first and only time in the accounts of the treasurer of the company as one of the recipients of payment for their performances at court.

This company had for its patron James I, after he had come to the throne. Thereafter they were called the King's Men. They were the most favored of companies at court. From the summer of 1594 to March, 1603, they played almost continuously in London and traveled out of the metropolis very little. About 1608 they moved into the winter theater of the Blackfriars.

But although Shakespeare was by this time the leading playwright of the day, and a part owner of the company, he does not seem to have been a star actor. As a dramatist he was the mainstay of the company for about fifteen years; but the part of the Ghost in Hamlet was as important a one as he usually played. On an average he must have written about two plays a year; although he probably

wrote much more rapidly in the early part of his career.

At this time he was very prosperous. Even before 1596 he was able to resume his relations as a moneyed man at Stratford-on-Avon. His father's affairs were in a pretty bad way during the last ten years of his life; but Shakespeare helped him out a great deal.

In 1596 Shakespeare's son Hamnet died; but the next year Shakespeare bought one of the largest houses in Stratford, and in 1605 he bought an estate of 107 acres in the open fields of Old Stratford, together with a farmhouse, garden, and orchard.

But all the time London remained his headquarters. There is evidence that in 1604 he "lay" temporarily or permanently in the house of Christopher Mountjoy, a tire-maker of French abstraction, at the corner of Silver St. and Monkwell St. in Cripplegate, London, and his morals at this time were vouched for in a letter written by an actor, "The more to be admired that he was not a company-keeper... would not be debauched, and if invited to court he was in pains." Nevertheless he was quite a favorite at court. It is said that he wrote "Merry Wives of Windsor" because of the desire of Elizabeth to see fat Falstaff in love.

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SHAKESPEARE'S WORK ROOM



SHAKESPEARE'S WORK ROOM, in which he wrote many of his plays, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Shakespeare."

#### FRIENDS AND CONTEMPORARY REPUTATION

*Monograph Number Five in The Mentor Reading Course*

SHAKESPEARE appears to have always been on the most friendly terms with his fellows of the stage. One of them, named Augustus Phillips, left him a small legacy in 1605, and he was very intimate with Ben Jonson.

Ben Jonson was one of the finest poets of Shakespeare's time. He was born in the beginning of the year 1573. His father died a month before he was born, and his mother married when Ben was two years old. His stepfather provided him with the foundations of a good education, and later he was sent to Westminster School, at the expense of its head master, William Camden, who was Jonson's firm friend in after life. Jonson was nearly nine years younger than Shakespeare, and was merely an actor at the time that Shakespeare had reached the height of his career; but the two became great friends.

This, however, did not spare them several sharp encounters of wit. At one time Jonson said that "Shakspeer wanted arte"; and he later said that Shakespeare

wrote too easily and quickly. But nevertheless he declared the great dramatist to have been "honest and of an open and free nature," and he said that for his own part "I love the man and do honor his memory as much as any."

Jonson's powers as a dramatist were at their height during the earlier half of the reign of James I, but the close of this king's reign found the foremost of its poets in a very unprosperous condition. He died in 1637, and was buried on the north side of the nave in Westminster Abbey.

There is a great deal of evidence concerning Shakespeare's literary reputation during his lifetime. There were many allusions to his work both as poet and as dramatist. These are all full of praise. A kind of literary handbook published in 1598 says that Shakespeare was "most excellent in both kinds (i.e., comedy and tragedy) for the stage," and one of "the most passionate among us to bewile and bemaime the perplexities of Love."

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THE AVON AND STRATFORD CHURCH



## THE AVON AND STRATFORD CHURCH, at Stratford, the picturesque birthplace of William Shakespeare, are the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Shakespeare."

### THE ENGLAND OF SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

Monograph Number One in The Mentor Reading Course

THAT period in the history of the world which is known as the Renaissance was a period of revival in learning, and of renewed interest in the arts. Between the classic times of the Greeks and Romans and the Renaissance there was a long period of intellectual sluggishness which is called the Dark Ages. The Renaissance began in Italy about the fourteenth century; but in England it was at its height in the sixteenth century. It was during this period that William Shakespeare lived.

Elizabeth became queen of England in 1558 at the age of twenty-five. The England that she was to rule was not a quiet England. It was a time of various religious controversies, a period of expanding commerce, and a century of wonderful works of literature.

Queen Elizabeth was a wonderful woman and an excellent ruler of England. Her character has been many times attacked; but, selfish and heartless as she appears to have been, one must always admire the power and force of her personality. The Venetian ambassador to England at that time wrote of her, "Such an air of dignified majesty pervades all her actions that no one can fail to judge her a queen. She is a good Greek and Latin scholar, and besides her native tongue she speaks Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian, and her manners are very modest and affable."

If we look back at Queen Elizabeth's time, we meet, in addition to the great poet and dramatist himself, a host of famous names in statesmanship and letters. There was Baron Burleigh, chief minister and adviser of the queen. There was Spenser, the wonderful poet who wrote the "Faerie Queene," which few people read nowadays, but which is worth anyone's time. And then we see Sir Philip Sidney, the ideal gentleman

of the sixteenth century, who wrote "A Defence of Poesie." This is still a good and noble argument for the art of poetry. His death was in keeping with his graceful and chivalrous life. It happened in the war of the Low Countries. He and his companions were fighting against great odds. All around them muskets and cannon banged and roared. Three or four times they cut through the enemy; but at last a cruel musket ball gave this brave, polished gentleman, Sidney, his death wound.

Among these great Elizabethans there was also the wonderful, intellectual Francis Bacon. Some people believe that he wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare. And we find Christopher Marlowe, called "Kit" by his friends, one of the most harnessed young daredevils of Elizabethan times. He was born in the same year with Shakespeare, and was the son of a poor shoemaker; but before his dramatic death (he was killed in a tavern brawl before he was thirty years old) he had written some of the greatest poetry in the English language.

All these geniuses and many others were accustomed to gather at the Mermaid Tavern in London. This was the great gossiping place of that rapidly growing metropolis. Here came Thomas Lodge, who wrote some plays and a novel entitled "Rosalynde" from which Shakespeare took the idea of "As You Like It"; and Thomas Nashe, the satirist, quick-witted, fearless, and wild-living; and Robert Greene, who wrote poems that a saint might have written and lived a life that would make many a wicked man turn pale. Another famous character often seen at the Mermaid was Ben Jonson, one of Shakespeare's closest friends.

These were the men, then, of Shakespeare's time, and this was the England in which he lived and wrote.

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SHAKESPEARE'S GRAVE IN STRATFORD CHURCH



## SHAKESPEARE'S GRAVE IN STRATFORD CHURCH, the last resting place of England's greatest poet, is the subject of one of the intaglio- gravure pictures illustrating "Shakespeare."

### LAST YEARS AND DEATH

Monograph Number Six in The Mentor Reading Course

SHAKESPEARE left London for good in 1610. He retired and lived at his house on New Place, Stratford. Here he lived the life of a retired gentleman. He had his garden with its mulberry tree and his farm in the near neighborhood. His brothers, Gilbert and Richard, were still alive, and his sister, Joan, was happily married. Of his daughters, the eldest, Susanna, had married John Hall, a physician.

However, his retirement did not mean that he broke off from his London life completely. He may have written the last few of his plays at Stratford, and in 1613 he devised an emblem to be painted by one Richard Barbage and worn in the gift on Accession Day by the Earl of Rutland. In the same year he purchased for £140 a freehold house in the Blackfriars, London.

On March 25, 1616, Shakespeare made his will. This was evidently done in haste, because it contains many errors and interlineations. A month after this will was signed, on April 23, 1616, he

died, and was buried in the chancel of the parish church at Stratford.

And now into the quietness of the shady parish church come from all parts of the world reverent pilgrims, who gaze with full hearts at the strange inscription on the slab of stone in the chancel floor, under which rest the remains of the great hero of the world of books. It is a strange, warning inscription to those who hold this grave most sacred:

"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear  
To dig the dust enclosed here;  
Blest be the man that spares these stones,  
And curst be he that moves my bones."

His last request was only for a quiet tomb. His works might take care of themselves.

A more elaborate monument, with a bust by the sculptor Gerard Johnson, was in due course set up on the chancel wall.

His wife did not long survive him. She followed her husband to the grave on August 6, 1623. After the death of his granddaughter, Lady Bernard, in 1670, there were no direct descendants of Shakespeare in existence.

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